

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Kansas
COUNTY:	Osborne
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE:	

## 1. NAME

COMMON:

Geodetic Center of the U. S. (preferred name)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Meades Ranch Triangulation Station; North American Datum

## 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

SW 1/4, Sec. 34, T9S, R11W

Meade's Ranch; 17 miles southeast of

CITY OR TOWN:

Osborne

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

No. 1 Keith Sebelius

STATE

Kansas 67473

CODE

20

COUNTY:

Osborne

CODE

141

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

(Check One)

- ☐ District ☐ Building  
☒ Site ☐ Structure  
☐ Object

OWNERSHIP

- ☐ Public  
☒ Private  
☐ Both

Public Acquisition:

- ☐ In Process  
☐ Being Considered

STATUS

- ☐ Occupied  
☒ Unoccupied  
☐ Preservation work  
in progress

ACCESSIBLE  
TO THE PUBLIC

- Yes:  
☐ Restricted  
☐ Unrestricted  
☒ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☒ Agricultural ☐ Government ☐ Park ☐ Transportation ☐ Comments  
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Private Residence ☐ Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Educational ☐ Military ☐ Religious \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Entertainment ☐ Museum ☒ Scientific \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Mrs. A. Josephine Robinson

STREET AND NUMBER:

713 West Main

CITY OR TOWN:

Osborne

STATE:

Kansas 67473

CODE

20

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

Osborne County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:

Osborne

STATE

Kansas 67473

CODE

20

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration

DATE OF SURVEY: 1939

☒ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Records destroyed. A guide book, Kansas, was published in 1939.

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

100-0000-003  
171



## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The rolling terrain of a pasture some 17 miles southeast of Osborne contains the triangulation station commonly referred to as the geodetic center of the United States. Marking the exact spot is a circular concrete marker about 24 inches in diameter and not more than six inches above ground. A small bronze plate is located in the center of the concrete. The marker is located on a high point from which the rugged grassland appears to slope downward in all directions.

There are additional markers underground.

The site is not readily accessible; the only approach is by way of rough ranch trails.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian      ☐ 16th Century      ☐ 18th Century      ☒ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century      ☐ 17th Century      ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1891, 1901, 1913

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | losophy                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A circular concrete marker no more than six inches high and two feet across is situated in an isolated pasture on what is known historically as Meades Ranch. A bronze disk embedded in the concrete contains a triangle. The dot in the center of that triangle is the geodetic center of the United States. Known officially as the Meades Ranch Triangulation Station, it was established in 1891 by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and was one of many such stations along two great arcs of triangulation. One arc extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the other from the Canadian to the Mexican border. These two arcs intersect in the Meades Ranch area.

In 1901 the Meades Ranch station at 39° 13' 26.686" north latitude and 98° 32' 30.506" west longitude was selected as the U. S. Standard datum, the fixed point to which all maps and land measures in this country are related. This station was chosen for several reasons. It was located approximately 40 miles south of the geographic center of the United States (near Lebanon in Smith county, Kansas) and at the juncture of two great arcs of triangulation. Also of importance was that checking by the Coast and Geodetic Survey indicated that the geodetic determination and the astronomical determination of this station were closer in agreement than for other stations being considered.

Geodetic survey officials from Canada and Mexico decided in 1913 that it would be advisable to fit the triangulation of their nations to that of the United States. As a result the entire North American continent has accepted the Meades Ranch station as the North American datum.

It is in relation to this spot in an Osborne county pasture that all property lines, all maps, and city, county, state and international boundaries in North America are established.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- "Insignificant Rock in Kansas Marks Center of United States," Kansas City Times, January 19, 1948.
- Isley, Bliss, and W. M. Richards, Four Centuries in Kansas (Wichita, Ks., The McCormick-Mather Co., 1936), p. 221.
- Kerbey, McFall, "A Network of Surveyed Lines," National Geographic Magazine, v. 63 (May, 1933), pp. 648, 649.
- Lapham, Jim, "For Map Makers It All Begins in Kansas," Kansas City Star, May 3, 1970.
- "Meades Ranch North of Lucas Base for All Maps in America," Abilene Daily Reflector, July 22, 1939.

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	°	' "
NE	° ' "	° ' "		39	13	26.686
SE	° ' "	° ' "		98	32	30.506
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:		Richard Pankratz, Planner	
ORGANIZATION	Kansas State Historical Society	DATE	May 1, 1973
STREET AND NUMBER:		120 West Tenth Street	
CITY OR TOWN:	Topeka	STATE	Kansas 66612

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☒ State ☐ Local ☐

Name

Nyle H. Miller  
Nyle H. Miller

Title Exec. Dir., Kans. State Hist. Soc.Date June 12, 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS